

AMENDMENTIn the Claims

Please amend claim 20 to read as follows and add new claims 36-40.

A¹ 20. (Amended) The method as recited in claim 19 wherein a rate of transitions is determined according to a number of evaluation intervals having one or more transitions occurring in the predefined phase zone.

A² 36. (New) A method comprising determining whether a phase-locked loop (PLL) circuit that is coupled to an input data stream has locked to the input data stream according to whether transitions of the input data stream occur below a predetermined rate in a predetermined portion of a sample clock period of a sample clock utilized to sample the input data stream.

37. (New) An apparatus comprising:
a variable oscillator that is part of a phase-locked loop; and
means coupled to the variable oscillator for determining whether the phase-locked loop has locked to an input data stream according to whether transitions of the input data stream occur in a predetermined portion of a sample clock period at a rate that is below a predetermined rate.

38. (New) A method comprising determining whether a phase-locked loop (PLL) circuit that is coupled to an input data stream has locked to the input data stream according to whether transitions, occurring in a predetermined portion of a sample clock period of a sample clock utilized to sample the input data stream of the input data stream, occur below a predetermined rate.

39. (New) The method as recited in claim ~~38~~³⁶ further comprising varying an output of a variable oscillator while the phase-locked loop is not locked to the input data stream.